DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 183 CE 030 240

AUTHOR Lewin-Epstein, Noah
TITLE Employment and Attitudes toward Working among High School Youth.
INSTITUTION National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY National Center for Education Statistics (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE [Aug 81]
CONTRACT 300-78-0208
NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Education Work Relationship; Employment; Employment Experience; Employment Opportunities; *Employment Patterns; Grade 10; Grade 12; High Schools; High School Seniors; *High School Students; Job Skills; Longitudinal Studies; National Surveys; *Part Time Employment; Sex Stereotypes; *Student Employment; Unemployment; Wages; *Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Data derived from a National Center for Education Statistics study of 58,728 high school sophomores and seniors, entitled "High School and Beyond," was used to describe youth employment experiences and attitudes. The data showed that employment is common among high school students and seems to be an integral part of adolescence; employment possibly may be necessary for the smooth transition to adult job-holding, at least for those students who do not go to college. Another major finding of the study was that as early as the sophomore year, most jobs held by high school students were structured jobs. Furthermore, a shift seems to take place during the high school years in the types of jobs students have, going from more unstructured jobs such as babysitting and grass mowing to structured jobs in food services, factories, sales, and clerical occupations. However, job experience varied widely among students of all types, and females generally worked fewer hours and were paid less per hour than males. Overall, the largest differences in work experience were found between sophomore and senior students. The senior students more closely resembled the adult labor force in every aspect considered in this study. Thus, even while youth are still in school, there appears to be a gradual movement toward greater involvement in work, and any evaluation of the teenage work experience would greatly depend on the stage at which it was observed. (KC)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

OCT 2 9 1981

ED208183

# Employment and Attitudes Toward Working Among High School Youth

Noah Lewin-Epstein

University of Chicago

and

National Opinion Research Center

This study was funded by the National Center for Education Statistics under Contract No. 300-78-0208.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Noah Lewin-Epstein

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE030240

## Introduction

During the 1970s the employment situation of American youth emerged as the central focus of manpower policy as well as labor force research. This interest was brought about primarily by the higher unemployment rates experienced by youth beginning in the mid 1960s (Freeman and Medoff 1978). Although higher-than-average unemployment rates are to be expected among younger members of the society, the growing gap between the unemployment rate of adults and that of youth is cause for much concern. Between 1965--when the teenage unemployment rate of 15 percent was triple that of the labor force as a whole--and the present, the employment situation has not improved for white youth and has further deteriorated for certain minority youth, most notably inner-city blacks.

A number of explanations for the growing difficulties facing youth have been proposed. Among these are the changing age structure of American society, and the relative increase in the size of youth cohorts; the rise in labor force participation among groups that compete with youth, most notably woman, and legal and illegal migrants; and economic factors, such as the decline in the agriculture sector and increased coverage of the minimum wage. In addition, the nature of adolescence as a "floundering period," or a time of moratorium (Osterman 1980) is of great significance. Some teenagers work for short periods when they are in need of money, others try out jobs until they find one that suits them. Furthermore, school attendance not only constrains the types of jobs young people can accept, but also imposes time limitations on their job hunting efforts. Much unemployment of teenagers is, therefore, a result of entry and reentry into the labor force, and the rate of unemployment from involuntary job loss is apparently no higher for youth than it is for adults (Meyer and Wise 1978).

The focus on individual hardship, as exemplified in the unemployment statistics, is only one aspect of the growing interest in the employment situation of youth. In a broader sense, it is the transition from school to work that is becoming the center of attention. The institutional arrangements and regulations governing the amount of education and the minimum age at which a young person can start working in many occupations were originally aimed at protecting youth and increasing their well-being. Yet they also had the effect of prolonging adolescence. These arrangements isolate youth from the adult world and, as Kenneth Clark pointed out, "The vestibule stage of adolescence may be prolonged to a point where social and psychological stresses on young people may present for them and the society a most severe problem" (Clark 1957).

The widespread belief that meaningful work begins upon the completion of schooling has been challenged in recent years in reports by the President's Science Advisory Committee (1974), the National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education (1976), and the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (1979). With only slight variation in their major conclusions, these groups argue for increasing the exposure of teenagers to the world of work through a variety of policies and programs to facilitate the transition to adulthood. This is meant not only to ease the difficulties in the labor market experienced during adolescence, but also to provide all youth with the experience, coping skills, attitudes, and orientation necessary for integration into the world of work. In fact the major approaches to vocational development, although not singling out early employment experience, have emphasized adolescence as a time in which knowledge is acquired, tentative decisions are made, and vocational interests tend to crystalize (Osipow, Walsh, and Tosi 1980).

In this respect it is just as important to pay attention to youth in schools (the majority of teenagers) as to those teenagers who have already left school. Indeed, recent research indicates that "holding a job while in school does result in reduced post-school rates of joblessness for teenage young men and young women who do not later attend college" (Stephenson 1980, p. 30).

Recently, a number of studies have focused on the employment behavior of youth in general (Borus, et al. 1980) and of those still in high school in particular (Steinberg et al. 1980, Greenberger et al. 1980). The paper presented here follows in their footsteps in its attempt to study the meaning of work as part of the adolescent experience. Based on newly obtained data from high school students, this paper provides a preliminary description of the prevalence of work among youth, its economic meaning, and the extent to which youth are actually interested in work experience at this period of their lives. The paper also focuses more specifically on the employment experience: the kinds of jobs high school students engage in, and the shift from unstructured to structured work settings as students mature. The implications of the different experiences will be outlined in the final section.

## The Data

The data presented in this paper are from the first (1980) wave of the National Center for Education Statistics study, HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND, a longitudinal study of U.S. high school seniors and sophomores. This study was conducted for NCES by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

The sample contains 1,016 high schools and a target number of 36 seniors and 36 sophomores in each of the schools. In many schools, however,

fewer than the target numbers participated for two reasons. First, some students (or in some cases, their parents) declined to participate. Second, some schools had classes smaller than 36 seniors or sophomores. Thus the total number of students participating in the survey is 58,728.

The sample was a two-stage stratified probability sample with schools drawn proportional to their size and 36 sophomores and seniors drawn randomly from each selected school. Substitutions were made for noncooperating schools in those strata where it was possible, but not for students. Refusals by students and parents and absences resulted in an 84 percent completion rate for students. Information was obtained from students by means of self-administered questionnaires filled out in special sessions conducted at the schools during the winter and spring of 1980.

## Work as Part of the Adolescent Experience

Much of the interest in the employment situation of youth has focused on racial and ethnic differences. The growing gap in unemployment rates of black and white teenagers is often singled out as the central issue in recent trends, and the lack of work experience associated with lower employment ratios among blacks is blamed for their greater difficulties in transition to adulthood. Figures presented here (table 1) are for three major groups: teenagers of Hispanic origin, blacks, and all other youth--mostly non-Hispanic whites (this group is referred to as whites in all of the following discussions). The figures generally present a familiar pattern, with whites exhibiting the highest participation rates--59 percent for sophomores and 77 percent for seniors. Black teenagers are less likely than other youth to be in the labor force.

(TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE)

If it is assumed that the experience derived from employment during adolescence is an important contact with the adult world, then attention should be focused on the employment ratio and the fact that relatively few black youth have work experience while in high school. During the week of the survey, less than one-third of the black sophomores (28.5 percent) were employed, as compared to 44 percent of the whites; and less than 50 percent of the black seniors were employed at a time when two-thirds of the white seniors were. Hispanic youth were better off in this respect than blacks.

Rates of participation in the labor force do not provide a complete picture, and in fact may be quite deceiving, when it comes to the work activity of youth. This is so primarily because of the part-time nature of the jobs held by teenagers still in school. The commitment of youth to work, then, may be more appropriately determined from the amount of time spent at work, rather than their classification as labor force participants. The mean hours of work per week ranged from 12 hours for black female sophomores to 22 hours for Hispanic male seniors. In general a number of factors contributed to variations in the amount of time spent working. Academic students worked less than their peers in the general and vocational programs, and Hispanics worked more than blacks or whites. The major difference, though, was between the two cohorts.

In each of the groups examined there was a 30 to 50 percent increase in hours of work between the sophomore and senior cohorts. This, along with the earlier findings of greater participation among seniors, clearly indicates the changes that take place over this two-year period vis-a-vis work habits. Although still in school, seniors commit themselves to a large amount of work activity. This is emphasized by the finding that many among this age group

apparently work full-time while still in school (reaching 20 percent among senior vocational students).

(TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE)

The findings presented so far all point to the fact that work is an integral part of the adolescent experience. Over half of the in-school teenagers were employed during the survey, and those employed spent a considerable number of hours at their jobs. The relationship of work to other activities that are part of a high school student's life is an important question. At the extreme, if we assume that a teenager is under severe time constraints, we might expect that time spent at one activity, such as work, would come at the expense of another undertaking--doing homework or some leisure activity, for example. Tables 3 and 4 show the number of hours per week students spent on homework and watching television in relation to the time spent at work during the week prior to the survey. The most striking fact about these tables is that there seems to be only a weak relationship. In other words, students who did not work and students who worked 20 hours or more spent approximately the same amount of time on homework and watching television. This is particularly true for sophomores.

Senior students who work seem to spend somewhat less time doing homework, particularly those who work more than 20 hours a week; and they spend about three hours less watching television than do their peers who do not work at all. Unfortunately these are the only activities for which we have estimates of actual time spent, but it was also found that students who work more than 20 hours a week read slightly less often that students who do not work, and they tend to drive or ride around for pleasure more often.

(TABLE 3 AND TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE)

Overall, it appears that high school students have an abundance of time at their disposal, so much that even a fairly strong commitment to work does not seriously impinge upon other activities. Yet, the fact that some decrease in time spent on homework, reading for pleasure, or watching T.V. was found for senior students working 20 hours a week or more (but not for sophomores) may tell us something about the different nature of work for the two cohorts. Among seniors we might be witnessing a departure from school-based activities, and a more central role for work; in the case of sophomores work may still be quite incidental. This is congruent with an incremental approach to the transition from school to work and in contrast to an approach that views the transition in abrupt stages. One mechanism that may bring about such changes is the type of jobs students hold, and the greater commitment required in jobs held by seniors. This will be elaborated shortly.

Economic Aspects of Working

Students, and high school students in particular, are different from most adult members of the society in that education is considered a legitimate substitute for work activity and they are not expected to engage in work until after they complete their schooling. Economic advances in past decades have also made it less necessary for most teenagers to work in order to support their families. For the most part, then, high school students are free to decide whether or not to work. In a situation such as this it is of particular interest to study the way in which wages are related to the choice to participate in the labor force and indeed to find or accept a job.

A significant number of students said that they would take a job that paid less than $3 an hour when asked the lowest wage at which they would

accept a job during high school. Over 50 percent of the seniors and 80 percent of the sophomores would take a job at a wage no higher than $3, and only a small fraction of the students would require $4 or more before they took a job.

Though the findings suggest that, on the whole, the lowest wages necessary to induce high school students to take a job are quite low, the question still remains whether high reservation wages inhibit labor force participation and increase the likelihood of unemployment among certain student groups. In the continuing debate over the employment situation of youth, one hypothesis has been that teenagers may have unrealistically high expectations of the labor market, and that they hope to receive higher wages than are actually offered for the types of jobs they can fill. As a result these students remain unemployed or leave the labor force. This hypothesis would lead us to expect that students who are unemployed or out of the labor force are in this position in part by their own choosing, based on their attitudes toward work. One aspect of this attitude is their high reservation wages as compared to what the market will offer.

The argument is further elaborated to take into account the skill level of these youth. It is assumed that all those who want to work can be ordered on some imaginary continuum based on characteristics that are desirable to employers, such as skills, motivation, and compliance. The higher one's rating on the desired characteristics, the more likely one is to be employed. It follows from this, in the case of the population reported on here, that employed students may be qualitatively different from those unemployed or out of the labor force, and that a simple comparison of their reservation wages is therefore inappropriate. In other words, according to the queue hypothesis, unemployed students may have lower reservation wages

than employed students, but these reservation wages may still be too high in comparison with their skills, motivation, and other characteristics important to employers.

We suggest here that the grade point averge (GPA) of students may serve as a proxy for desirability to employers. The GPA measures (in part) individual ability, but it probably reflects motivation and compliance with school rules as well. Furthermore, it is the indicator of skills employers are most likely to have access to. As a final step, then, differences in GPA between employed and unemployed students will be taken into account. This is done by predicting the reservation wages of unemployed students and students out of the labor force under the assumption that they have the same mean GPA as employed students.

(TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE)

Our findings (table 5) show, in general, that reservation wages did not differ much among students in different labor force statuses. In the case of sophomores and seniors alike, employed students tended to have slightly higher reservation wages than the unemployed students and those who were not in the labor force. This finding remained unchanged when analysis was performed separately for different ethnic groups. These findings tend to refute the notion that students' attitudes are a cause of the labor force difficulties they face. The evidence is quite consistent that youth -- sophomores and seniors in high school -- want to work and are willing to do so at wages that are often below the minimum set by the government. This is true

even when possible differences in skills or other characteristics deemed desirable by employers are taken into account.[1]

There is one exception to these generalizations about reservation wages. All sophomore females, regardless of their ethnic background and employment status, had higher reservation wages than the mean wages earned. In the case of white and black females, those who were not employed had higher reservation wages than those employed. For these populations it is possible that low participation rates and high unemployment are related, in part, to the low wage rates offered them; low in comparison even to other student groups.

Unfortunately, the present dataset includes no information on the way in which income earned by high school students is put to use. Therefore, it is not immediately clear whether the employment of high school students is important in alleviating economic hardship. One way of approaching this issue with the information at hand is to study the role that adolescent earnings play vis-a-vis total family income. Since we have information on hourly wages and the number of hours a week each student worked, we can estimate weekly earnings. If we further assume, as a first approximation, that the student earned a similar amount each week all year round, we can obtain an estimate of a student's annual income from employment by multiplying weekly earnings by 50 (see second column in table 6). The mean annual earnings of students in a particular population group relative to the mean family income[2] in that group provides a measure of the present economic importance of students' work.

---

[1]The findings remained essentially unchanged when type of community was included in the prediction models used for adjusting the rates, not presented here.

[2]Since the mean income is typically higher than the median income for the group, we obtain conservative estimates of the proportion of parental income constituted by student earnings.

(TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE)

Under the assumption that students work 50 weeks a year, some senior students, particularly minority males, may earn up to 25 percent of the family income they reported. For females and for all sophomores, annual earnings are lower in absolute amounts and as a proportion of parental income. These figures quite likely overestimate the annual income of high school students since previous research has shown that teenagers, especially those in school, work significantly less than 50 weeks a year. Two estimates of annual earnings were derived by applying a measure of weeks employed reported in the DoL study of labor force behavior for youth enrolled in school during 1978. Calculations were first made taking into account the different number of weeks worked by youth from different ethnic groups. The second estimate of student earnings relative to family income is calculated assuming that all students had the chance and desire to work the same number of weeks per year as white males and females (for the male and female populations respectively).

We find that senior students may earn from 4 to 9 percent of their average family income. The earnings of minority youth, with generally lower family income, may be quite a significant contribution to the household. This would be even more strongly the case if they were given the opportunity to work as many weeks during the year as white youth.

While employment during high school may be an important experience in its own right, and in its applications for future integration into the adult world, it is also the case that it has immediate economic benefits. It is possible that students use all their earnings for personal consumption and do not turn anything over to their parents (as noted, we have no information on this matter at present). But even if students used all their earnings for personal consumption, this would mean less demand on the income of parents,

and the family as a whole would benefit. Some implications for unemployment are immediately evident. Being unemployed means foregoing income that could amount to between $500 and $1,500 for sophomores and $1,000 to $2,000 for seniors. Furthermore, high unemployment is unfortunately concentrated in population groups where student employment can contribute most (in relative terms) to family income.

Jobs Students Hold

The range of jobs held by teenagers is probably limited only to the coarseness of the classification used by the researcher. Teenagers, even those still in school, are in all kinds of jobs, and no one job category used in this study contains more than one-quarter of the senior student body. But does this variability of jobs make any difference? High school jobs are commonly viewed as homogeneous work experience that does not differ very much from student to student.

(FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE)

The distribution of students among various jobs is markedly different for males and females (figure 1).[1] Half the sophomore females who work for pay do babysitting. This is not at all surprising considering that these teenagers are still in school, have limited saleable skills, and are willing to spend only a small number of hours at work. What may be more surprising is that by the senior year the proportion of female students babysitting declines to less than 10 percent. Changes for females and males are noted in other job

[1] In considering the male-female differences, the reader should keep in mind that the proportion of males in the "other" job category is double that of females in the sophomore cohort and about two-thirds higher in the case of seniors, and it is not at all clear what sort of jobs these students hold.

categories as well. Males, who tend to have odd jobs or work in farm or other manual jobs during the sophomore year, are more likely to be in sales, food services, and skilled trade at a later age.

Comparing males and females makes it clear that the greatest differences are found in the smaller, more specialized job categories: 17.5 percent of the senior females had a clerical job as compared to 2 percent of the males; 11 percent of the males were in skilled trade and 14 percent in manual trade in contrast to 1 percent and 2 percent, respectively, in the case of females. Apparently, sex differentiation (and possibly stereotyping) exists even at this stage, where work is a secondary activity, and jobs, for the most part, are low-skill, non-specialized jobs. Other individual characteristics were only weakly related to the types of jobs students held. Males and females from different ethnic backgrounds held similar jobs, as did students with different family incomes. School program, though, showed some relationship to type of job; particularly in the senior year, when vocational students were twice as likely as other students to hold skilled jobs or clerical jobs (those most closely associated with specialized school training).

For the most part, concern with teenage employment has focused on the fact of employment, and very little attention has been paid to job characteristics. A recent study (Greenberger, Steinberg, and Ruggiero 1980), unique in its attempt to study the characteristics of the in-school teenagers' work setting, found substantial differences among jobs held by teenagers in the amount of social interaction, frequency of cooperative behavior, use of skills learned in school, and amount of training received on the job. As work during high school becomes more common, the job setting is likely to be more important and more consequential to the students' futures.

(TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE)

In order to test whether different job settings actually offered students different experiences, three dimensions were studied and compared across jobs. Jobs were expected to differ in the demands they place on their incumbents and the commitment they require. This will be illustrated by a higher average number of hours spent at work. Jobs are also likely to differ in the rewards they offer, and two of these are: wages and training provided. In general females worked less hours per week and received lower hourly wages in all job categories. Seniors worked more and received higher wages than did sophomores (table 7). But attention here is focused on differences among jobs, and it is clear that large differences exist

Sophomores in food services or farm jobs, worked twice as many hours as their peers doing babysitting or odd jobs. Senior females in health related jobs or factory jobs earned more (up to 70 percent more) than females in other jobs. Similarly, certain jobs provided significantly more training than others. Skilled trade and health-related jobs provided training for 25 to 38 percent of the incumbent students, whereas in some jobs less than 10 percent received training. Overall, health-related jobs, skilled jobs, and factory jobs demand more hours of work, pay higher wages, and provide more training than other jobs. At the other extreme we consistently find that students in odd jobs or babysitting jobs work the least number of hours, earn the lowest wages, and receive the least amount of training. These are jobs typically considered marginal to the labor market and typical for teenagers. But in fact only a small fraction of teenagers in school, and mostly the younger students, have such jobs.

In a more general sense, we may conceive of certain jobs as closely related to the family setting, very similar to household tasks. These tasks

are usually performed in an unstructured setting outside any organizational environment. There is no network of coworkers, nor a developed authority structure. Teenagers who work in such settings are alone for the most part and have little chance of interacting with others on the job. A second and opposite category, according to this line of reasoning, would include jobs that are not performed in a family-like environment but rather within a corporate system. These jobs are part of an organization with formal and informal structure. There exist supervisors and other people that symbolize authority. There are coworkers and other role-types that provide the opportunity for interaction on the job.

Performing odd jobs and babysitting are most closely associated with the first category of jobs just described, which will be referred to as "unstructured." Factory work, office work, health-related jobs, and even food service jobs are considered part of the second category of jobs, which will be called "structured." The structured teenage jobs more closely resemble, and are even part of, the work situation to be faced when the youth becomes an adult.

Using the distinction between structured and unstructured jobs, we find that over one-third of the sophomores are engaged in unstructured jobs, whereas only 7 percent of the working seniors have such jobs. One interpretation of this difference is that youth in high school are not a homogeneous group with respect to work. Although work is a secondary acitivity for most members of the population, work during this period should not be considered trivial. By the time students reach the last grade, practically all employed students work in an organizational setting that will help prepare them to confront the world of full-time work.

Yet, we find that the transition from unstructured to structured jobs is not equally achieved by all population subgroups. In particular, students

from all ethnic backgrounds who come from low-income families (annual income less than $12,000) and live in rural areas are least likely to experience the transition. While only 7 percent of the total senior cohort had jobs in an unstructured setting, the figures for low-income rural students were 13.8, 15.5, and 12.4 percent for black, Hispanic, and white students, respectively. This is the case in spite of the fact that in the sophomore year students from these backgrounds did not differ significantly from other students. These students are at a disadvantage, even though they have jobs, since, as, we have indicated, the unstructured jobs provide a less favorable work experience. These jobs are also least likely to facilitate continuity with jobs after school. While approximately half the senior students working in structured jobs who did not plan to go to school during the year after high school expected to hold the same or a related job, only 15 percent of the students in the unstructured jobs had similar expectations. Differences, then, in the job setting even while still in high school may have quite important implications, and, as work becomes more prevalent among youth, greater attention should be paid to the context in which it is performed so that youth can benefit and the transition to adulthood can be facilitated.

## Conclusion

In a number of different ways the findings presented in this report indicate that employment is common among high school students and seems to be an integral part of adolescence. The experience of having responsibility for a set of tasks, associating with adults, learning certain skills, earning money and learning to manage it may all be an important part of growing up and a necessary condition for a smooth transition to adulthood. In this respect the lack of employment, even for those in school, may be a disadvantage, particularly for students who do not intend to go on to postsecondary education.

We often speak of "typical" teenage jobs--those jobs that are not always viewed as part of the market economy, jobs in which adult members of the labor force are rarely found. Doing odd jobs around the house, mowing lawns, and babysitting are the kinds of activities that come to mind. These unstructured jobs are distinguished from all other work, referred to as structured. The former are closely related to the functioning of the family and are performed within the household, though not necessarily one's own; the latter are typically away from the family in a corporate setting and are part of the functioning of an organization. A major finding of this study was that as early as the sophomore year most jobs held by high school students were structured jobs. Furthermore, a shift seems to take place during the high school years (based on the cohort comparison) in the type of jobs students have. The proportion of students who had unstructured jobs declined from 35 percent among sophomore students to 7 percent among seniors. Although most teenage jobs are likely to be marginal or peripheral (in the sense in which these terms are used by Sullivan 1978 and Beck, Horan, and Tolbert 1978), more often than not these jobs are part of the market economy, not isolated from it. In this context it should also be noted that the job experience of high school students should not be viewed as homogeneous. Student jobs differed in the number of hours of work they offered (or required) and in the wages they provided. Students in certain jobs, such as skilled trade or health-related jobs, also received considerably more training than other employed students.

Overall, the largest differences in work experience were found between sophomore and senior students. The senior students more closely resembled the adult labor force in every aspect considered in this study. Thus, even while youth are still in school, there appears to be a gradual movement toward greater involvement in work, and any evaluation of the teenage work experience would greatly depend on the stage at which it was observed.

## REFERENCES


Beck, E. M., Horan, P. M., and Tolbert, C. M. 1978. "Stratification in a Dual Economy: A Sectoral Model of Earnings Determination." American Sociological Review 43:704-20.

Borus, M. E., Crowley, J E., Rumberger, R. W., Santos, R., and Shapiro, D. 1980. Youth and the Labor Market-1979, A Preliminary Report. Columbus, Ohio: Center for Human Resource Research, Ohio State University.

Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. 1979. Giving Youth a Better Chance. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Clark, K. 1957. Present Threats to Children and Youth. Draft report to the National Council on the Employment of Youth. New York, New York.

Freeman, R. B., and Medoff, J. L. 1978. The Youth Labor Market Problems in the United States: An Overview. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Freedman, M. 1976. "The Youth Labor Market." In From School to Work: Improving the Transition, a collection of policy papers prepared for the National Commission for Manpower Policy.

Greenberger, E., Steinberg, L. D., and Ruggiero, M. 1980. "A Job is a Job ... or is it? Behavioral Observations in the Adolescent Workplace." Irvine, California: Program in Social Ecology, University of California.

Greenberger, E., Steinberg, L. D., Vaux, A., and McAuliffe, S. 1980. "Adolescents Who Work: Effects of Part-Time Employment on Family and Peer Relations, Journal of Youth and Adolescence.

Meyer, R., and Wise, D. S. 1967. "High School Preparation and Early Labor Force Experience," unpublished.

National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education. 1976. The Education of Adolescents. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.

Osipow, Samuel, W. Bruce Walsh, and Donald J. Tosi. 1980. A Survey of Counseling Methods. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press

Osterman, Paul. 1980. Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

President's Science Advisory Committee. 1974. Youth: Transition to Adulthood, a Report on the Panel of Youth. Washington, D.C.: Executive Office of the President.

Steinberg, L. D., Greenberger, E., Garduque, L., and McAuliffe, S. 1980. "High School Students in the Labor Force: Some Costs and Benefits to Schooling and Learning." Irvine, California: Program in Social Ecology, University of California.

Stephenson, S. P., Jr. 1980. In-School Work and Early Post-School Labor Market Dynamics. Working paper, Department of Economics, Pennsylvania State University.

Sullivan, T. A. 1978. Marginal Workers, Marginal Jobs. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press.

TABLE 1

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF SOPHOMORE AND SENIOR STUDENTS, BY ETHNICITY AND SEX: SPRING 1980

| | Total Population | Total Participating | Employed | Unemployed | Labor Force Participation Rate | Employment/ Population Ratio | Unemployment Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5=2:1 | 6=3:1 | 7=4:2 |
| **Sophomores** | | | | | | | |
| Blacks ..... | 359,887 | 193,534 | 102,328 | 91,206 | 53.8 | 28.5 | 47.1 |
| Males ..... | 160,428 | 94,083 | 53,196 | 40,887 | 58.6 | 33.1 | 43.5 |
| Females ..... | 196,111 | 96,783 | 48,042 | 48,741 | 49.4 | 24.5 | 50.4 |
| Hispanics ..... | 253,714 | 143,583 | 90,061 | 53,522 | 56.6 | 35.5 | 37.3 |
| Males ..... | 123,001 | 79,888 | 53,466 | 26,422 | 64.9 | 43.4 | 33.1 |
| Females ..... | 127,342 | 61,527 | 35,468 | 26,059 | 48.3 | 27.8 | 42.4 |
| White + Other . | 2,345,642 | 1,384,104 | 1,041,278 | 342,826 | 59.0 | 44.4 | 24.8 |
| Males ..... | 1,117,216 | 686,523 | 504,057 | 182,466 | 61.4 | 45.1 | 26.6 |
| Females ..... | 1,222,516 | 693,259 | 533,593 | 159,666 | 56.7 | 33.7 | 23.0 |
| **Seniors** | | | | | | | |
| Blacks ..... | 269,068 | 189,139 | 131,054 | 58,085 | 70.3 | 48.7 | 30.7 |
| Males ..... | 117,185 | 86,715 | 62,972 | 23,743 | 74.0 | 53.7 | 27.4 |
| Females ..... | 151,883 | 102,424 | 68,082 | 34,342 | 67.4 | 44.8 | 33.5 |
| Hispanics ..... | 174,362 | 131,033 | 104,365 | 26,668 | 75.1 | 59.8 | 20.4 |
| Males ..... | 88,471 | 69,620 | 56,153 | 13,467 | 78.7 | 63.5 | 19.3 |
| Females ..... | 85,891 | 61,413 | 48,212 | 13,201 | 71.5 | 56.1 | 21.5 |
| White + Other . | 2,093,410 | 1,606,580 | 1,365,832 | 240,748 | 76.7 | 65.2 | 15.0 |
| Males ..... | 1,000,735 | 784,196 | 669,988 | 114,208 | 78.4 | 67.0 | 14.6 |
| Females ..... | 1,092,676 | 822,383 | 695,843 | 126,540 | 75.3 | 63.7 | 15.4 |

TABLE 2

MEAN NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK, AND PROPORTION OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY WORKING FULL TIME;[a] BY COHORT, ETHNICITY, AND SCHOOL PROGRAM: SPRING 1980

| | Sophomores | | Seniors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| **Mean Hours of Work Per Week** | | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | |
| Blacks ..... | 13.7 | 11.9 | 20.4 | 17.2 |
| Hispanics ..... | 17.2 | 12.4 | 22.2 | 18.5 |
| Whites ..... | 14.7 | 10.2 | 21.1 | 17.9 |
| School Program | | | | |
| General ..... | 15.3 | 11.1 | 21.6 | 18.4 |
| Academic ..... | 12.9 | 9.4 | 19.2 | 16.6 |
| Vocational ..... | 16.3 | 11.0 | 23.3 | 19.0 |
| **Proportion Working Full Time** | | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | |
| Blacks ..... | 8.7 | 9.4 | 16.7 | 7.4 |
| Hispanics ..... | 14.5 | 5.0 | 18.6 | 8.8 |
| Whites ..... | 8.4 | 2.9 | 12.9 | 4.6 |
| School Program | | | | |
| General ..... | 9.0 | 4.3 | 14.9 | 6.3 |
| Academic ..... | 5.9 | 2.0 | 8.7 | 2.9 |
| Vocational ..... | 12.6 | 4.7 | 20.2 | 6.9 |

[a]Full time was defined as working 35 hours a week or more.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT DOING HOMEWORK EACH WEEK, BY NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT AT WORK, SCHOOL GRADE, AND SEX: SPRING 1980

| Number of Hours Spent at Work | Sophomores | | Seniors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| None ..... | 3.9 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.6 |
| 1 to 4 hours ..... | 3.7 | 4.7 | 3.7 | 4.4 |
| 5 to 21 hours ..... | 3.6 | 4.4 | 3.4 | 4.3 |
| 22 to 34 hours ..... | 3.3 | 4.4 | 3.0 | 3.8 |
| 35 hours or more .... | 3.5 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 4.2 |

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT WATCHING TV EACH WEEK, BY NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT AT WORK, SCHOOL GRADE, AND SEX: SPRING 1980[a]

| Number of Hours Spent at Work | Sophomores | | Seniors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| None ..... | 18.9 | 17.4 | 16.3 | 17.0 |
| 1 to 4 hours ..... | 17.8 | 16.5 | 14.3 | 14.8 |
| 5 to 21 hours ..... | 17.4 | 16.1 | 13.9 | 14.0 |
| 22 to 34 hours ..... | 16.8 | 16.5 | 13.6 | 13.4 |
| 35 hours or more .... | 17.0 | 16.9 | 13.3 | 14.0 |

[a]These figures were obtained by multiplying the number of hours watching TV during week days by 5. Thus they underestimate total time spent watching TV during the entire week but are appropriate for our discussion of the relationship to hours of work.

TABLE 5

RESERVATION WAGES AND RESERVATION WAGES ADJUSTED FOR DIFFERENCES IN GRADE POINT AVERAGE, BY SEX, GRADE, AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS: SPRING 1980

| Employment Status | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reservation Wage | Adjusted Reservation Wage[a] | Reservation Wage | Adjusted Reservation Wage[a] |
| **Sophomores** | | | | |
| Employed . . . . . | 2.85 | (2.85) | 2.36 | (2.36) |
| Unemployed . . . . . | 2.80 | 2.81 | 2.61 | 2.60 |
| Out of labor force . | 2.71 | 2.72 | 2.45 | 2.47 |
| **Seniors** | | | | |
| Employed . . . . . | 3.09 | (3.09) | 2.88 | (2.88) |
| Unemployed . . . . . | 2.98 | 2.97 | 2.84 | 2.82 |
| Out of labor force . | 3.00 | 3.00 | 2.75 | 2.77 |

[a]Predicted reservation wages using the mean grade point average of employed students in the equations.

TABLE 6

ESTIMATES OF ANNUAL EARNINGS FOR TEN SUBPOPULATIONS OF SENIORS USING THREE DIFFERENTLY BASED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NUMBER OF WEEKS EMPLOYED

| Population group[a] | Weekly earnings[b] | Based on 50 weeks of employment a year | | Based on estimates of the number of weeks employed in a year from DoL/NLS Study | | Based on working the number of weeks as whites estimated in DoL/NLS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Annual earnings | Percent of family income[c] | Annual earnings | Percent of family income[c] | Annual earnings | Percent of family income[c] |
| Male | | | | | | | |
| Black urban . . . | 68.87 | 3,443 | 20.0 | 1,095 | 6.4 | 1,846 | 10.7 |
| Black rural . . . | 70.85 | 3,542 | 25.8 | 1,126 | 8.2 | 1,899 | 13.9 |
| Hispanic urban . | 78.96 | 3,948 | 22.4 | 1,634 | 9.3 | 2,116 | 12.0 |
| White suburban . | 74.39 | 3,719 | 11.8 | 1,994 | 6.3 | 1,994 | 6.3 |
| White rural . . . | 69.74 | 3,487 | 16.0 | 1,869 | 8.8 | 1,869 | 8.8 |
| Female | | | | | | | |
| Black suburban . | 59.36 | 2,968 | 16.1 | 849 | 4.6 | 1,383 | 7.5 |
| Black rural . . . | 53.82 | 2,691 | 22.9 | 770 | 6.5 | 1,254 | 10.7 |
| Hispanic urban . | 59.68 | 2,984 | 18.0 | 943 | 5.7 | 1,390 | 8.4 |
| White suburban . | 59.30 | 2,965 | 9.4 | 1,382 | 4.4 | 1,382 | 4.4 |
| White rural . . . | 50.98 | 2,549 | 12.7 | 1,188 | 5.7 | 1,188 | 5.9 |

NOTE: Figures in the last four columns of the table are based on estimates of employment during 1978 for youth 16 to 22 enrolled in school, classified by sex and ethnic group. See Michael E. Borus et al., "Pathways to the Future: A Longitudinal Study of Young Americans, Preliminary Report: Youth and the Labor Market, 1979," Center for Human Resources Research, the Ohio State University, 1980, p. 84 (table 4.6).

[a]Different population groups are presented for male and female students.

[b]Based on the mean hours of work a week and the mean hourly wage for students in the population group.

[c]Estimated annual earnings as a proportion of the mean family income in the population group.

TABLE 7

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOBS HELD BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, BY SEX AND COHORT: SPRING 1980

| Type of Job | Males | | | | Females | | | | All Students | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean Hours | | Mean Wages | | Mean Hours | | Mean Wages | | Proportion Training[a] | |
| | Sophomores | Seniors | Sophomores | Seniors | Sophomores | Seniors | Sophomores | Seniors | Sophomores | Seniors |
| Odd jobs ..... | 7.6 | 12.0 | 2.86 | 3.30 | 6.9 | 8.5 | 2.55 | 2.86 | 7.9 | 14.2 |
| Food service . | 19.0 | 21.4 | 3.07 | 3.32 | 17.2 | 19.7 | 2.88 | 3.07 | 3.6 | 12.0 |
| Babysitting... | 7.8 | 13.2 | 1.77 | 2.30 | 7.4 | 9.9 | 1.61 | 2.00 | 4.7 | 7.1 |
| Farm work .... | 19.0 | 21.4 | 2.90 | 3.18 | 13.8 | 17.6 | 2.62 | 2.82 | 4.0 | 16.9 |
| Factory work.. | 17.9 | 24.9 | 3.29 | 3.62 | 16.9 | 22.9 | 3.20 | 3.46 | 8.9 | 24.0 |
| Skilled trade. | 17.9 | 22.2 | 3.38 | 3.65 | 10.1 | 16.8 | 3.12 | 3.32 | 6.0 | 38.6 |
| Manual trade . | 14.7 | 20.2 | 3.16 | 3.46 | 11.4 | 15.0 | 3.05 | 3.32 | 2.4 | 11.7 |
| Store clerk .. | 18.2 | 22.4 | 3.01 | 3.41 | 16.5 | 19.6 | 2.92 | 3.28 | 8.5 | 12.5 |
| Clerical work. | 12.5 | 19.1 | 3.17 | 3.52 | 14.1 | 18.2 | 3.03 | 3.32 | 20.1 | 22.7 |
| Health related | 19.5 | 22.4 | 3.33 | 3.56 | 16.0 | 20.3 | 3.34 | 3.42 | 28.2 | 24.4 |
| Other ..... | 14.7 | 20.7 | 3.10 | 3.42 | 10.5 | 16.2 | 2.92 | 3.28 | 15.1 | 17.1 |

NOTE: Sophomore population = 1,392,265
Senior population = 1,782,105

[a]Percent of students who spent one-fourth or more of their time at work, in training.

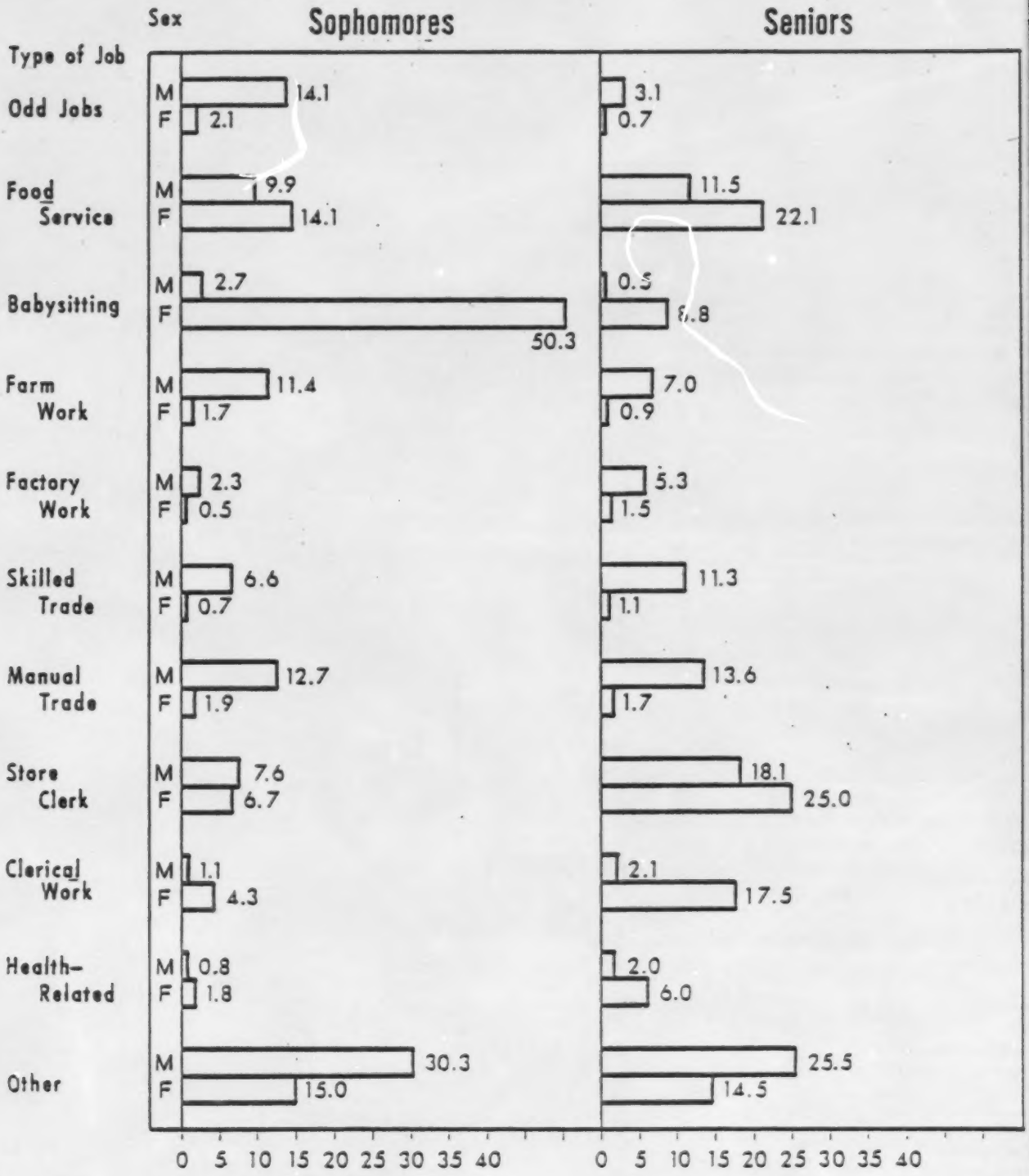


Fig. 1. Jobs students held, by sex and grade: Spring 1980